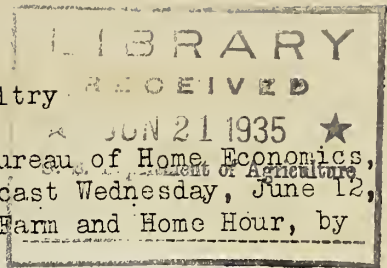


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## When the Consumer Buys Dressed Poultry

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Thomas W. Heitz, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, broadcast Wednesday, June 12, 1935, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, by NBC and a network of 50 associate radio stations.

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MR. SALISBURY: Well, Miss Van Deman, after our strawberry festival of last week, are you coming down to plain and practical fare this week? Something prosaic like liver and onions?

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, sir, we're staying right on the luxury level today. I persuaded Mr. Heitz, of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, to come over with me to talk about chicken.

MR. SALISBURY: Fried chicken?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, that is, chicken for frying. A good many women tell me they're not sure what the poultry dealer means when he talks about fryers, broilers, bakers, and stewers. Mr. Heitz, you're an authority on these terms. Just what is a broiler in market parlance?

MR. HEITZ: I assume, Miss Van Deman, you're asking about dressed poultry, as the city woman sees it in the retail market.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, that's what I mean.

MR. HEITZ: Well, to the consumer a broiler is a young, soft-meated bird, generally a male, weighing 2-1/2 pounds or less after it is bled and plucked.

MISS VAN DEMAN: That weight includes head, feet, and entrails then?

MR. HEITZ: Yes, that's right. Occasionally a dealer sells his poultry at so much a pound drawn. But more often the price per pound means for a bird undrawn and with head and feet still on.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Then a 2-1/2 pound broiler as bought in the market becomes considerably less than that when cleaned and ready to cook.

MR. HEITZ: Yes. It will weigh about a pound and seven-eighths probably. On the average, chickens lose at least 25 percent of their weight when drawn and prepared ready to cook, as compared with what the poultry dealer calls their dressed weight. As compared with their live weight, they'll lose around 30 percent.

MISS VAN DEMAN: That's a good point for us women to keep in mind when we're buying broilers or any other poultry. By the way, Mr. Heitz, what time of year are the most broilers on the market?

MR. HEITZ: June, July, and August are the peak months for fresh broilers from farm flocks. Of course the specialized poultry farms are sending birds to market all the year around, and we're using more and more fresh frozen broilers as we realize how high they are in quality.

(over)

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, I've found that these fresh frozen chickens packed under ideal conditions are sometimes better than the fresh killed. What about the price of broilers now?

MR. HEITZ: There's a rather unusual situation on broilers right now. In some markets they are actually cheaper than stewing fowl.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Heitz, what is the difference between a broiler and a fryer in your terminology? Of course I realize that down in Dixie every yellow-legged young chicken is potential fried chicken. But in the advertisements on store windows here in Washington and in other big cities, I notice a distinction between fryers and broilers.

MR. HEITZ: Yes, there is one worth noting by the consumer. Sometimes there's even a price differential. We define a fryer as a young bird weighing 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 pounds, as the dealer weighs it up for you.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Then a fryer is just a little heavier than a broiler, and a little older, I suppose.

MR. HEITZ: Yes. The heavy season for fryers doesn't start until July and it runs through October. Oftentimes you get more meat in proportion to bone in a frying chicken than you do in a broiler. A high quality fryer has fine-grained, light-colored flesh and you can see bits of fat here and there underneath the skin.

MISS VAN DEMAN: When does a fryer turn into a baker, provided we let him escape the frying pan?

MR. HEITZ: Well, roasting, or baking chickens come onto the market in abundance from September up to Christmas. Again I'm speaking of the chickens from farm flocks, not the specially produced birds or the ones that are frozen or held in storage. There's no time in the year when roasting chickens are not available from some source, but the fresh-killed birds are most plentiful in the late fall and early winter. Farmers like to sell off their young male birds as roasting chickens when they are 7 to 9 months old.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How much does a good plump roasting chicken weigh?

MR. HEITZ: Anywhere from 3-1/2 pounds up.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I prefer them up. I find that a roasting chicken needs to weigh 4 to 5 pounds in order to have enough meat on the frame to cook well and carve well. The heat of the oven is likely to dry out a small roasting chicken.

I'd rather cook it as smothered chicken and wait until I can get a heavier plumper bird to roast. Capons are about the finest chickens for roasting, aren't they?

MR. HEITZ: Yes. Capons are grown for the fancy trade. They are unsexed male birds, generally about 7 to 10 months old, and they weigh from 6 pounds up to 8 and 9 sometimes. Capons are generally well fattened and very tender fleshed, considering their size and age.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Heitz, do you class all chickens over a year old as mature fowl?

MR. HEITZ: No, the term fowl if properly used means only female birds. Male birds over a year old should be sold as roasters, and hens over a year old should be sold as fowl or stewers.

MISS VAN DEMAN: But are they always?

MR. HEITZ: No, I regret to say they are not. A man came to our office the other day with a bird he had bought for a broiler. It was really an old hen, fit only to stew or make into a fricassee.

MISS VAN DEMAN: That's the kind of a transaction that does nobody any good. When that man wants a chicken again he certainly won't go back to that dealer, and for a while he'll probably have a prejudice against the whole race of chickens. Mr. Heitz, is there any kind of a grade labeling system that might keep a dealer and a consumer from committing a blunder like that?

MR. HEITZ: None that carries through to the consumer. There are U. S. Government grades for dressed poultry, four of them, that are widely used in the wholesale trade. The boxes or barrels of dressed poultry carry these U. S. grade stamps. But the individual birds are not tagged, so the consumer might get the benefit.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Just as one woman's opinion, I think that's a pity. Most city and town women buy chicken only occasionally. It's hard for them to be trained judges of quality and I think that a good informative label clipped to the chicken's wing would be a help to the poultry dealer and a help to the woman buyer.

Well, time's up for today. Thank you, Mr. Heitz, for coming over, and good-buy Everybody until next week.

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